



# LAKE WHATCOM WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report  
Agate Heights Service Area • WA State ID# 52957B

## 2020 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

1220 Lakeway Drive  
Bellingham, WA  
98229  
(360) 734-9224  
[www.lwwsd.org](http://www.lwwsd.org)

Normal Business Hours:  
8:00am to 5:00pm  
Monday through Thursday  
except Holidays

Emergencies:  
360-734-9224 anytime

### **What is this report?**

In accordance with the federal Re-authorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996, all public and private water utilities are required to prepare and provide annual drinking water quality reports to their customers. As well as being required by federal law, we want to keep you informed about the excellent water services delivered to you over the past year. Our goal is to provide safe, dependable, and high quality drinking water.

### **Where does the drinking water come from?**

The Agate Heights water system is served by the Giesbrecht 10-inch diameter artesian well, which is located within the Squalicum aquifer system. This well produces a high quality drinking water that contains naturally occurring iron and manganese and other minerals. The water is drawn from the well and undergoes a chlorination and filtration process to reduce the level of iron and manganese, and to provide sufficient chlorine to protect the water distribution system. Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is pleased to report that your drinking water is safe and meets or exceeds all federal and state requirements.

### **What's in the drinking water?**

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District routinely monitors your drinking water in accordance with federal and state laws. Included in this report are the results for constituents that are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and were detected in samples collected between the dates of January 1 and December 31, 2020. To obtain a complete listing of all constituents that were analyzed for, please contact the District. All drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some constituents and/or contaminants. It's important to remember that the presence of these constituents does not necessarily pose a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791. In the following table you will find many terms and abbreviations you may not be familiar with. Abbreviations and terms used in this report include:

**Parts per billion (ppb)**

**Parts per million (ppm)**

**Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU)** – Nephelometric turbidity unit is a measure of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

**Action Level (AL)** – The concentration of a contaminant, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

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**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** – The “Maximum Allowed” MCL is the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs (see below) as feasible using the best available treatment technology. MCLs are set at very stringent levels. To understand the possible health effects described for many regulated constituents, a person would have to drink 2 liters of water every day at the MCL for a lifetime to have a one-in-a-million chance of having the described health effect.

**Maximum Disinfection Residual Level (MRDL)** – The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** – “The Goal” is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**N/D** – Not Detected

## *Facts about detected substances*

**Arsenic** – While your drinking water meets USEPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. USEPA's standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. USEPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.

**Barium** – Some people who drink water containing barium in excess of the MCL for many years could experience an increase in their blood pressure. Barium is a lustrous, machinable metal that exists in nature only in ores containing mixtures of elements. Barium is used in electronic components, metal alloys, bleaches, dyes, ceramics, glass, and fireworks, as well as well drilling operations where it is released directly into the ground.

**Copper** – Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's disease should consult their personal doctor.

**Fluoride** – Some people who drink water containing fluoride over the MCL over many years could get bone disease (pain and tenderness of the bones); children may get mottled teeth.

**Lead** – Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development, including slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. Elevated levels of lead in drinking water can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. In our Agate Heights system, lead is not found in the treated water, but lead in drinking water can come from pipes and faucets in our homes. Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is responsible for providing high quality drinking water but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for at least 30 seconds before using the water for drinking or cooking. You can capture this water to use on plants. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791, or online at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

**TTHMs (Total Trihalomethanes) & HAAs (Halo-Acetic Acids)** – Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes or halo-acetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

**Chlorine** – Chlorine is used as a water disinfectant. Disinfection is the most important step in the water treatment process to destroy pathogenic bacteria and other harmful agents. Chlorination is a very common and effective method for the disinfection of drinking water. The District is required to maintain a free-chlorine residual throughout our water distribution system.

## Information for persons with compromised immune systems

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, and some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the toll free Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Analytical results of 2020 testing completed by Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District and state-certified laboratories

Detected Substance	Violation Yes/No	2020 (or most recent) Level	MCL, AL, or MRDL	MCLG	Likely Source of Substance
<b>Arsenic</b>	No	0.004 ppm	0.010 ppm	0 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, runoff from glass, and electronics production wastes
<b>Barium</b>	No	0.039 ppm	2 ppm	2 ppm	Erosion from natural deposits, discharge from metal refiners, discharge of drilling waste
<b>Copper</b>	No	The 90th percentile value of 6 homes sampled showed copper at 132 ppb with a range of 54 ppb to 132 ppb	1,300 ppb	1,300 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits, leaching from wood preservatives
<b>Fluoride</b>	No	0.10 ppm	4 ppm	4 ppm	Water additive which promotes strong teeth; erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
<b>Lead</b>	No	The 90th percentile value from 6 homes sampled showed lead at a level of 1 ppb, with a range of N/D to 1 ppb	15 ppb	0 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits
<b>TTHM</b> Total Trihalomethanes	No	16.0 ppb	80 ppb	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
<b>HAAs</b> Halo-acetic acids	No	6.4 ppb	60 ppb	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
<b>Chlorine</b>	No	Of the free chlorine residual samples that were collected with our required bacterial samples in the distribution system, the average chlorine residual was approximately 0.60 ppm with a range of 0.24 ppm to 1.01 ppm	4 ppm MRDL	0.2 ppm minimum at first customer in distribution system	Added at water treatment plant for disinfection

## Cross Connections may be hazardous to your health

**What is a Cross Connection?** A cross connection is any actual or potential physical connection between a potable (i.e., drinkable) water line and any pipe, vessel, or machine containing a non-potable fluid, solid, or gas where the non-potable substance can enter the potable water system by backflow. Garden hoses left connected and turned on when not in use can easily contaminate your home plumbing system. For questions or concerns about potential cross connections, please contact Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District employee Rich Munson at (360) 734-9224.

**Do I have any obligations regarding cross connections?** Yes, if your residence has an in-ground irrigation system, heat pump, boiler or any other type of identified cross connection that requires a backflow prevention device, you are required to have the device inspected annually by a state-certified Backflow Assembly Tester.

**REMEMBER:** a cross connection not only threatens your health and safety, but that of your neighbors and the community as whole, so **PLEASE** do your part to prevent them.

## Our commitment to our customers

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District staff is on duty around the clock to provide the safest and best quality water service to every home. We ask that all of our customers help us protect our precious water sources which are the heart of our community, our way of life, and our children's future.



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## Questions or Concerns about your water?

For questions regarding this report or concerning your water, please contact Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, Water Treatment Plant Operator Kevin Cook at (360) 734-9224. To learn more, please attend any of our regular, bi-monthly Board of Commissioner meetings.

- Second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm
- Last Wednesday of each month at 8:00 am

Meetings are held at the District office at 1220 Lakeway Drive. At the beginning and end of each regular meeting, there is a public comment period where you may express any questions or concerns to the Board.

## Conservation

Inefficient and or leaking faucets, toilets, and excessive outdoor watering account for a significant amount of water that is treated at water treatment plants. Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District encourages voluntary water conservation and there are many simple ways to help in this effort. By installing water saving shower heads, kitchen and bathroom faucets and low flow toilets, an average residence could save 25% or more water a day than a residence without. **We request voluntary even numbered addresses to only water outside on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and odd numbered addresses to water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, with no outdoor watering on Mondays.** Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is a metered system, so saving water means saving money. The District's goal is to reduce the summertime peak usage by 25% and the overall annual usage by 1% per capita. Water may seem like an unlimited resource in the Pacific Northwest, but there is a limit, and it can only be plentiful for all future generations if we all do our part in conserving this precious resource.